

## CHAPTER 17

# Implementation

## Introduction

### *The Importance of Implementation*

**T**he City of Lynchburg Comprehensive Plan presents a vision of what the community will be like in the future and identifies the steps required to move toward that vision. As a long-term guide for the community, the Plan helps City leaders make decisions about the location, scale, and quality of new development; the improvement of neighborhoods and commercial areas; the revitalization of downtown and surrounding historic areas; the extension and upgrade of utilities; and the future of the City's parks, public spaces, and natural areas. One of the first and most important decisions is the choice of projects to be implemented during the first five years. At the end of five years, the plan will be updated and any new developments can be taken into account as the next set of implementation strategies is chosen.

Following data collection and analysis (Phase I) and development of the Vision; Goals, Objectives, & Strategies; Plan Framework Map, and Future Land Use Map (Phase II), the third phase of comprehensive planning is implementation—the time when the City begins the Five-Year Implementation Plan.

**Following the discussion of priority implementation strategies, this chapter includes information on:**

- How to amend the Comprehensive Plan.
- What citizens should expect to see as the Comprehensive Plan is implemented and how they should use the Plan.
- The Implementation Matrix: An overview of who is responsible for the Five-Year Implementation Program.
- Monitoring implementation—is the City meeting its goals?

### *Third Phase of Plan Preparation: Setting Priorities*

#### **First Five Years: An Implementation Program**

A Comprehensive Plan, is just that—comprehensive. It includes all the goals, objectives, and strategies needed to achieve its twenty-year vision. However, the City cannot tackle all these at once. It must set priorities for its efforts, choosing those implementation strategies most important to work on first. These strategies address pressing current needs or are deemed so important for the City's civic health and success that they must be pursued immediately.

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**After listening to citizens in public meetings and taking into account all the needs expressed, the City has chosen the following strategies, one from each chapter, to include in its first Five-Year Implementation Program. They are listed in the order they appear in the Plan, not in order of priority:**

1. **Schools.** Support efforts to improve the quality of Lynchburg Public Schools. This goal is listed first because it was frequently cited as having a major impact on so many other aspects of the quality of life in Lynchburg. (Chapter 16, Public Facilities)
2. **Citywide Land Use & Development.** Complete updates and revisions to the City's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance. (Chapter 5)
3. **Design Character & Quality.** Prepare citywide design standards addressing: landscaping/trees, signage, site design, pedestrian circulation, lighting, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), buffering, and property maintenance. (Chapter 6)
4. **Economic Development.** Prepare a comprehensive citywide strategic plan to guide overall growth, diversify employment, and expand the tax base. (Chapter 7)
5. **Downtown & Riverfront Master Plan 2000.** Implement the *Downtown & Riverfront Master Plan 2000*, beginning with those projects listed as first priority in the Master Plan. (Chapter 8)
6. **Commercial & Employment Areas.** Promote the improvement and revitalization of commercial corridors and districts, while being sensitive to cultural and natural resources and surrounding land uses. Begin by preparing neighborhood-based conservation, stabilization, and revitalization plans for the 5th Street and the Plaza-Midtown areas, with other Revitalization Area Plans to follow, as identified in the Plan Framework. (Chapter 9)
7. **Neighborhoods & Housing.** Establish a Neighborhood Task Force to develop recommendations for a public or public-private organization (the "Neighborhood Partnership") to guide the City's efforts in neighborhoods. (Chapter 10)
8. **History, Culture, Education & The Arts.** Ensure the identification, preservation, and sensitive treatment of City-owned historic buildings and sites. (Chapter 11)
9. **Natural Systems.** Manage natural systems to improve the health and enjoyment of future generations. Begin by preparing and using an environmental checklist in reviewing private and public development proposals. (Chapter 12)
10. **Parks & Recreation.** Support implementation of the City's *Recreation Facilities Study and Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (1997). Begin by updating and expanding the greenway master plan to include the James River Heritage Trail corridor and its associated park properties. (Chapter 13)
11. **Transportation.** Establish short- and long-term transportation priorities through the development of a comprehensive City Transportation Master Plan. (Chapter 14)
12. **Public Utilities.** Maintain a comprehensive approach to stormwater management with a focus on addressing regional stormwater issues. Focus on those areas of the City that are experiencing the most problems and coordinate stormwater management efforts with the Combined Sewer Overflow project to avoid aggravating stormwater problems. (Chapter 15)
13. **Public Facilities.** Provide adequate public facilities and services to support the City's long-range planning goals and objectives. (Chapter 16)

### ***Remaining Strategies: Next Priority & Policy Guidance***

The strategies that emerged during Plan preparation can be classified into three groups: 1) those in the Five-Year Implementation Program (listed above), 2) those that are the remaining action strategies, and 3) those that provide guidance for policy decisions.

Group 2 strategies are also important. These action strategies will be the next ones to be implemented after Group 1, if funding becomes available unexpectedly, or if one of the top ten strategies is delayed, or if a non-City group decides to undertake one of them.

#### **For example, one of the strategies in Chapter 13, Parks & Recreation, is:**

- Incorporate historic preservation, cultural landscape preservation, and cultural resource interpretation in plans for historic parks.
- 1) Catalogue, evaluate, and where necessary stabilize all historic park structures and landscape features.
- 2) Develop interpretive programs to explain their significance in Lynchburg's history.

Should a group of citizens interested in preservation of historic parks come forward, this strategy would be in place to guide their efforts at restoration of Miller Park, Riverside Park, and other historic parks in the City. Such a group would also be able to seek grant funding to support their work.

The third type of strategy is intended to provide policy guidance for City officials as they make decisions on behalf of the community.

#### **An example of this type of strategy, from Chapter 14, Transportation, is:**

- Preserve the City's history and protect neighborhoods by maintaining the character of existing road corridors.
- 1) The following roadways shall not be widened through the addition of lanes or the removal of existing parking lanes to permit increased traffic flow unless no other alternatives can be found and the City Council approves the widening:
  - Fifth Street, from the Lynch Bridge to Memorial Avenue
  - Twelfth Street, from Commerce Street to Fort Avenue
  - Rivermont Avenue, from the Blackwater Creek bridge to VES Road
  - Boonsboro Road, from VES Road to US Route 501
  - Boonsboro Road, from US Route 501 to the western corporate boundary
  - Langhorne Road, from Rivermont Avenue to Memorial Avenue
  - Link Road, from Boonsboro Road to Old Forest Road
  - Trents Ferry Road, from Boonsboro Road to the Northern Corporate Boundary
  - Memorial Avenue, from Fifth Street to Fort Avenue
  - Fort Avenue, from Park Street/Kemper Street to Memorial Avenue

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This strategy will guide decisions by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), as they prepare transportation plans for the Lynchburg area. It will also guide the City Council as they review transportation plans prepared by VDOT or by developers.

## How to Amend the Plan

The laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia specify that a locality's comprehensive plan shall be reviewed at least every five years. This review offers an opportunity to prepare a careful analysis of conditions in the City, revisit the vision to determine whether it remains viable, reexamine the goals and objectives that derive from that vision, and reevaluate what strategies are necessary to reach the vision. Such a review is also the natural time to amend the Plan, as suggested by events and activities since the initial adoption. However, it is possible that, at some time prior to the five-year update, the City will wish to amend this Plan. The initiative to amend may come from City Council, the Planning Commission, or the public. The amendment may be to the text of the Plan, the Future Land Use Map, or both.

Once adopted by the City Council, this Plan may be amended through a process similar to that for adoption. First, a petition for amendment should be made to the Planning Commission. This petition will be reviewed by City staff in the Department of Community Planning and Development, as well as any other affected City departments. Their recommendation(s) for approval or denial will accompany the petition to the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and make a decision on whether to certify the amendment to the City Council. The Council will hold a public hearing and then vote on the proposed amendment.

**There are several circumstances when an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan may be needed prior to a five-year review:**

- As each Revitalization Plan, Corridor Study Area Plan, Neighborhood Conservation Plan, Transportation Master Plan, and other plans contemplated in this Comprehensive Plan are completed, that plan will be adopted by the City Council and be incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan.
- The City has located a site for a new park or public facility that is not currently shown on the Future Land Use Map. The map should be amended prior to the City moving forward with land acquisition or construction.
- A private sector proposal for development or redevelopment is not in conformance with the plan and requires a rezoning or conditional use permit as well. The applicant will need to petition for a plan amendment and the rezoning or conditional use permit. These applications can be handled concurrently.

In reviewing plan amendments, the City will consider whether the proposal supports the vision, plan framework policies, and goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Expedient spot amendments that do not support the vision, framework, policies, and goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan; that are not in the best interests of the City; and that serve only the interests of the property owner will not be considered.

## **What Citizens Can Expect to See & How They Can Use the Plan**

This Plan is intended to guide decisions made by the City Council, Planning Commission, City officials, and City staff. It is the responsibility of concerned citizens to make certain the Plan is being followed—or to amend the Plan. Citizens are encouraged to read and become familiar with the Plan, and to use the Vision, Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Framework Map, and Future Land Use Map to support what they see as the best interests of the City.

## **The Implementation Matrix**

Table 17.1 is a chart showing each of the implementation strategies, what department/agency is responsible for implementing it, and the resources required. The fourth column will contain benchmarks to assist the City in monitoring progress towards implementation of the strategy. As implementation begins, a benchmark or “milestone” will be identified and, when that benchmark has been reached or exceeded, the City will know that the strategy has been successfully implemented.

These strategies are listed in the order of the chapters from which they are drawn; the order in which they are listed here does not indicate any relative importance. In fact, these strategies may be implemented simultaneously.

*NOTE: Table 17.1: Implementation Matrix appears on next two pages.*

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<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Location of Strategy</b>	<b>Assigned Agency</b>	<b>Resources/Actions Required</b>	<b>Milestones</b>
Prepare the Implementation Schedule		Community Planning & Development	a. City Manager oversight b. City agency head participation	
1. Support efforts to improve the quality of Lynchburg schools	Chapter 16	City School Board/ City Council	a. Forum for dialogue b. Investment plan c. Capital funding	
2. Revise Zoning & Subdivision ordinances	Chapter 5 Objective 1.A.	Community Planning & Development	a. Dedicated staff assignment b. Zoning legal consultant assistance c. City Attorney participation	
3. Prepare citywide development design standards	Chapter 6 Objectives 1.A.- 1.G.	Community Planning & Development	a. Dedicated staff assignment b. Local design & development professionals advisory committee c. Design professional on staff	
4. Prepare comprehensive citywide economic development/redevelopment strategic plan	Chapter 7 Objective 1.A.	Office of Economic Development	a. Economic development consultant assistance b. Funding for marketing and infrastructure investments	
5. Implement Downtown & Riverfront Master Plan 2000	Chapter 8 Objective 2.A.	Community Planning & Development Public Works	a. Coordinate w/ Lynch's Landing b. Determine order of projects c. Identify funding d. Prepare designs/specifications	
6. Commercial Areas: begin by revitalizing the 5th Street and Plaza/Midtown Areas	Chapter 9 Objective 1.A.	Community Planning & Development	a. Dedicated staff assignment b. Coordination with economic development/redevelopment strategic plan preparation c. Prepare revitalization plans	
7. Establish a Neighborhood Task Force	Chapter 10 Objective 1.A.	Community Planning & Development	a. Neighborhood Task Force to establish detailed strategy b. Neighborhood Partnership to implement strategy c. Neighborhood conservation plans d. Seed money for projects	

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8. Preserve City-owned historic buildings and sites	Chapter 11 Objective 3.B.	Community Planning & Development	a. Inventory & assessment of resources b. Renovation/rehabilitation plans c. Capital funding	
9. Manage natural systems-begin by preparing environmental checklist	Chapter 12 Objective 2.B.	Community Planning & Development	a. Draft checklist b. Coordinate w/ development community c. Use checklist	
10. Plan and implement a Greenway Program	Chapter 13 Objective 1.E.	Division of Parks & Recreation	a. Citizen advisory committee b. Region 2000 Regional Commission participation c. Comprehensive greenway plan d. Capital funding for land and easement acquisition e. Nonprofit foundation for donations and support	
11. Establish short- and long-range priorities through Transportation Master Plan (TMP)	Chapter 14 Objective 1.A.	Community Planning & Development Public Works	a. Prepare scope for TMP b. Draft TMP c. Coordinate with Region 2000 Regional Commission & VDOT d. Adopt TMP	
12. Maintain comprehensive approach to stormwater management	Chapter 15 Objective 3.B.	Community Planning & Development R.E.Lee Soil & Water Conservation District	a. Coordinate project w/ grant b. Identify regulatory needs c. Identify most-affected areas	
13. Provide adequate public facilities to support the City's long-range planning goals	Chapter 16 Objectives 1.A.-1.B.	Office of the City Manager	a. Identify needs based on infrastructure report b. Set priorities & schedule c. Capital funding	
14. Monitor Plan Implementation Progress	Chapter 17	Community Planning & Development	a. Citizen Monitoring Committee b. Planning Commission participation c. Annual report to City Council	

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## **Monitoring Implementation: Is the City Meeting Its Goals?**

One of the most important aspects of implementation is being certain that each strategy is moving forward; that this Plan has not simply been “put on the shelf.” In response to this concern, the City will establish a committee of citizens similar to the Citizen Steering Committee to oversee efforts to implement the strategies. This implementation oversight committee will report to the Planning Commission on an annual or semi-annual basis.

Each of the implementation strategies will be given a series of milestones or benchmarks so that the City will know when that strategy has been successfully implemented—or can measure how much more must be done before it is complete. These milestones will be identified during preparation of a work program that will guide the implementation of that strategy. The milestones will be chosen by the lead City department or agency, in consultation with the City Manager, the Planning Commission, and the City Council.